



JAN 19 2005

TO: Area Chief Medical Officers

FROM: Acting IHS Chief Medical Officer

SUBJECT: Further expansion of influenza vaccination recommendations

**ISSUE**

Most Indian Health Service, Tribal and Urban (I/T/U) programs have provided influenza vaccine to patients defined as high risk by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), but many sites have surplus vaccine. Surplus vaccine has been offered to local and state health departments, but only a limited number of doses have been purchased.

**BACKGROUND**

Based on assessments conducted by the IHS Immunization Coordinators in each Area, over 20,000 doses of influenza vaccine were redistributed throughout the I/T/U system. In accordance with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and CDC guidelines, influenza vaccination was limited to people in "high risk" groups.

Effective January 3, 2005, CDC expanded the list of priority groups recommended to receive inactivated influenza vaccine in locations where state and local health authorities judged vaccine supply to be adequate to meet demand (see below).

IHS expanded guidelines to include the additional risk groups as of December 22, 2004. Since then, I/T/U influenza vaccination needs for all high risk groups appear to have been met. In addition, per IHS guidance, surplus vaccine has been offered to local and state health departments. Despite these efforts, many sites continue to have surplus influenza vaccine. Therefore, I/T/U sites that have already vaccinated the high risk groups and have surplus influenza vaccine may expand influenza vaccination to other groups.

**ACTION PLAN**

**Expansion of the guidelines** - Effective immediately, sites that have vaccinated the high risk groups (see below) and still have flu vaccine that the local /state health department is not interested in purchasing can expand influenza vaccination to other eligible beneficiaries in their community. Sites should, however, continue to target the high risk groups for vaccination.

**Influenza Vaccination Guidelines:** People in the following high-risk groups should be targeted to receive influenza vaccination:

- all children aged 6-23 months,
- adults aged 65 years and older,
- persons aged 2-64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions,
- all women who will be pregnant during influenza season,
- residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities,
- children 6 months-18 years of age on chronic aspirin therapy,
- health-care workers with direct patient care, and
- out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged <6 months

**Expanded guidelines as of January 3, 2005 include:**

- Adults 50- 64 years
- out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of people at risk for serious complications from influenza:
  - children < 2 years
  - adults 65 years and older
  - pregnant women
  - people with certain underlying health conditions such as heart or lung disease, transplant recipients, and persons with AIDS.

**Expanded guidelines as of January 19, 2005**

- IHS eligible beneficiaries.



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